

# Resource Chapter 6

## *Infant and Toddler Activities: Young Infants, Mobile Infants, and Toddlers*

Because infants change and grow so quickly curriculum must adjust to their new developmental level. For this reason, activities are designed as prototypes for young infants, birth to 9 months, mobile infants, 8 to 18 months, and toddlers, 16 to 36 months. If infants or toddlers are in the younger range or their disability affects this particular area, use activities from a lower age range. If they are in the older range or activities seem too easy, move into the activities for older children, in Resource Chapters 1 through 5.

### ***Activity Goals***

The activities for infants and toddlers are divided into five broad areas: social awareness, language and communication skills, cognitive development, sensory motor skills, and creative development. Activities are organized by the goals they support. The targeted age group for each activity is designated: young infants (birth to 9), mobile infants (8 to 18), and toddlers (16 to 36). If it is appropriate for a broader age range, the designation includes that information. A birth to 18 designation would include children from birth to 18 months. All activity areas begin with activities for young infants, then activities for mobile infants, and finally, activities for toddlers. The activities that are in the book have their number identified; those that are in the book companion website are followed by a "w" (refer to Tables R6-1 and R6-2).

### ***Infant and Toddler Guidelines***

Because infants and toddlers have a small repertoire the accommodations needed can be applied in general to all the listed activities. The following list highlights



accommodations. They are more functional than accommodations for older children. The accommodations for regulatory problems relate to children who may later be identified with specific learning disabilities, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, and social, emotional, and behavioral disorders as well as some children on the autism spectrum.

#### **Adapting activities for infants and toddlers with:**

Regulatory problems: Detached

Focus on one behavior at a time. Teach body awareness, especially tension.

Regulatory problems: Underreactive

Use massage. Direct and redirect children. Actively teach items you might assume others would learn. Use brief, focused lessons. Engage children; model and reinforce appropriate eye contact, facial expressions, and gestures. Model interactions. Use multimodal methods.

Regulatory problems: Hypersensitive	Reduce excess stimuli (light, noise, activity). Be consistent. Teach adaptive skills.
Regulatory problems: Motorically disorganized/impulsive skills	Do a functional behavior assessment if undesirable behaviors continue and do not respond to traditional guidance. Try reinforcing quiet behavior with a special audiotape (turn off the tape if the child cries and so on). Redirect behavior. Give intermittent reinforcement. Work on self-control and self-image.
Regulatory problems: Dysregulated	Ignore inappropriate crying. Reinforce appropriate responses to situations. Be available. Develop a predictable schedule, especially as it relates to sleeping and eating. Teach infants and toddlers to self-comfort. Use music to set a mood. Gradually increase environmental demands.
Communication disorders	Talk to infants and toddlers. Support all communication. Build language and vocabulary. Help children respond to people and environmental stimuli. Look at communication as social interaction.
English language learners	Support children in developing vocabulary and language in their home language and English. Provide context for language learning. If helpful, use a simple picture communication system for toddlers to show how they are feeling or what they want.
Intellectual disabilities	Use toys that respond (shake rattle, it makes noise). Use verbal and physical prompts. Support and enhance a child's capabilities. Model desired behavior. Work toward independence in eating, dressing, and grooming. Use a picture-task analysis.
Gifted and talented	Provide activities with cause-effect relationships. Increase complexity while keeping activities at a developmentally appropriate level (read books with more details). Encourage and support motor skills. Be flexible.
Special health care needs	Normalize the educational setting within the medical aspects of health. Adapt to physical limitation, stamina, and endurance levels by flexible schedules. Learn danger signs and side effects of treatments (appetite loss, mood swings, hair loss, and so on) and develop a plan to deal with these. Have an emergency care plan.
Orthopedic and neurologic	Help children move as normally as possible. Work toward symmetry (using both sides of the body equally). Check with a physical or occupational therapist for the best way to position children. Actively promote peer interaction.
Hearing impairments	Use visual and tactile stimulation. Promote the use of auditory aids. Talk to children and use the communication system the family has chosen. Supplement this with pictures and photographs for choices and to support learning tasks.
Visual impairments	Use auditory and tactile stimulation. Promote the use of visual aids. Help children develop appropriate responses to auditory stimulation (look at speaker). Promote social interaction and mobility.

**Table R6-1: Activity goals and activity numbers in text and online**

Goals	Activity Numbers
• To increase social awareness	6–1, 6–2, 6–3, 6–4, 6–5, 6–6, 6–15, 6–25, 6–30 6–31w, 6–32w, 6–33w, 6–34w, 6–36w, 6–42w, 6–43w, 6–52w, 6–54w, 6–63w
• To increase language and communication skills	6–3, 6–5, 6–7, 6–8, 6–9, 6–10, 6–11, 6–12, 6–16, 6–18, 6–23, 6–28 6–32w, 6–34w, 6–35w, 6–36w, 6–37w, 6–38w, 6–39w, 6–40w, 6–41w, 6–42w, 6–52w, 5–53w, 6–58w

• To increase cognitive development	6-1, 6-7, 6-8, 6-13, 6-14, 6-15, 6-16, 6-17, 6-18, 6-19, 6-20, 6-21, 6-22, 6-24 6-35w, 6-38w, 6-43w, 6-44w, 6-45w, 6-46w, 6-47w, 6-48w, 6-49w, 6-50w, 6-51w, 6-55w, 6-56w, 6-57w
• To increase sensory motor skills	6-2, 6-4, 6-5, 6-6, 6-9, 6-10, 6-12, 6-13, 6-14, 6-17, 6-18, 6-19, 6-20, 6-21, 6-22, 6-23, 6-24, 6-25, 6-26, 6-27, 6-29 6-31w, 6-32w, 6-33w, 6-34w, 6-35w, 6-36w, 6-39w, 6-40w, 6-41w, 6-44w, 6-45w, 6-46w, 6-47w, 6-48w, 6-49w, 6-50w, 6-51w, 6-52w, 6-53w, 6-54w, 6-55w, 6-56w, 6-57w, 6-58w, 6-59w, 6-60w, 6-61w, 6-62w
• To increase creative development	6-10, 6-11, 6-25, 6-26, 6-27, 6-28, 6-29, 6-30 6-58w, 6-59w, 6-60w, 6-61w, 6-62w, 6-63w

**Table R6-2:** Age and reference numbers

Age	Activity Numbers
• Young infants (B to 9 months)	6-1, 6-2, 6-7, 6-8, 6-13, 6-14, 6-18, 6-20, 6-25, 6-26 6-31w, 6-32w, 6-35w, 6-43w, 6-44w, 6-49w, 6-50w
• Mobile infants (8 to 18 months)	6-3, 6-4, 6-9, 6-10, 6-15, 6-16, 6-21, 6-22, 6-27, 6-28 6-33w, 6-45w, 6-46w, 6-51w
• Mobile infants and toddlers (8 to 36 months)	6-52w, 6-53w, 6-54w, 6-58w, 6-59w
• Toddlers (16 to 36 months)	6-5, 6-6, 6-11, 6-12, 6-17, 6-18, 6-23, 6-24, 6-29, 6-30 6-33w, 6-36w, 6-37w, 6-38w, 6-39w, 6-40w, 6-41w, 6-42w, 6-47w, 6-48w, 6-55w, 6-56w, 6-57w, 6-60w, 6-61w, 6-62w, 6-63w

## Infant and Toddler Activities

### Social Awareness: Individual, birth to 9 months

## 6-1 Anticipation

**Goals:** To increase social awareness; to increase cognitive development

**Materials:** None

**Procedure:** Before beginning an event such as giving an infant a bottle, picking him up, or changing him, tell the infant what is going to happen. Show the infant the bottle and say, “Are you hungry? I have your bottle ready. Do you want it?” Then pause to give the infant time to respond. (Don’t expect him to say “yes,” you are giving him the time and respect to process information rather than just putting the bottle in his mouth.) Before picking up an infant hold out your arms and say, “I’m going to pick you up.” Then pause so the infant can anticipate what will happen. Keep the gestures and words you use consistent so the infant knows what to expect. Follow through with the action quickly; if you show him the bottle and he responds, then feed him right away; do not wait several minutes. Respond to the infant’s cues. If he quiets when approaching him say, “You know I’m going to pick you up.” Then do it.

**Assessment:** The infant increases the amount of time he can wait for an anticipated activity without fussing.

**Integration:** As infants learn that their world is predictable they are willing to wait longer for events to happen because they are developing trust.

**Social Awareness: Individual, B to 9 months**

## 6-2 Tummy Time

**Goal** To increase social awareness, to increase sensory motor skills

**Materials:** None

**Procedure:** Tummy time is whenever infants are not on their backs or sitting in seats or other containers. Carrying infants in different ways changes their view of the world and also helps them strengthen needed muscles. As you carry young infants point out items they can see, talk, or sing to them.

- Stomach down: To carry an infant stomach down place one arm underneath his chest with the hand supporting his chin and neck. The other arm goes around his entire body.
- Back to front vertical: Pick up the infant so his back is toward your front. Carry him in a vertical position so his head is up and he is looking out. For young babies keep their head centered as you hold them. As infants get older have them put their arms out and pretend to fly. As a variation put one arm under the infant to make a seat and the other arm around his middle for support.
- Back to front horizontal: Pick up the infant so his back is toward your front. Carry him in a horizontal position with his head in the elbow of your right arm as he is looking out. Your right arm goes under his head and your left arm goes between his legs to hold the infant's side. Your hands will meet in front.

**Assessment:** The infant will look around when held in various positions and carried.

**Integration:** Tummy time is adaptable and infants need to spend more time actively moving. By carrying them in different positions you give them the opportunity to increase muscular strength. Lack of tummy time may lead to flat areas on the back of the head, muscles that are tight or weak on one side of the neck, and delayed motor skills.

**Social Awareness: Individual, 8 to 18 months**

## 6-3 My Book about Me

**Goals:** To increase social awareness; to increase language and communication skills

**Materials:** Plastic sleeve covers, three-ring binders, markers, digital or regular camera, photographs of the infant, construction paper, paste

**To Make:** Take photographs of the infant doing various activities throughout the day. Print them or have them developed. Cut construction paper or posterboard into 8 1/2" × 11" pieces so that each fits the plastic sleeve cover. Paste the pictures of the infant on both sides of the construction paper and put each page in a plastic sleeve. Make a beginning page to identify the infant's book. Place in a 3-ring binder. Pictures can also be laminated or covered with clear contact paper.

**Procedure:** With the infant on your lap, look through the book with him and talk about each picture, what he is doing, and how wonderful he is. For younger infants, keep the book short and if possible have the pictures of the child alone doing everyday things (eating, sleeping, playing, and so on). As children get older have more pictures in the book with a wider range of events or make several shorter, more specific books such as "Shalini at Home," "Shalini at School," "Shalini Playing with Her Friends."

**Assessment:** The infant will look at the book.

**Integration:** Infants enjoy looking at these books. Take pictures of infants at school or ask parents to send in pictures, whichever is most appropriate. A digital camera makes it easy to add to books as infants change and grow. Photographs can also be used for assessment and to document developmental milestones.

**Social Awareness: Individual, 8 to 18 months**

## 6-4 Cups and Spoons

**Goals:** To increase social awareness; to increase sensory motor skills

**Materials:** A variety of plastic cups with handles, plastic spoons

**Procedure:** Place the infant in a highchair and place a cup and spoon on the tray. Encourage the infant to explore each item. Demonstrate how you can use the spoon to hit the cup or to stir, and then give the item back to the infant. Encourage her to pick up the cup with the handle and pretend to drink from it or eat with the spoon. Repeat this using a slightly different cup. For younger infants introduce the cup and spoon separately before pairing them. As infants gain experience, give them several different cups and spoons to play with at the same time.

**Assessment:** The infant will explore the materials and occasionally use the cups and spoons appropriately.

**Integration:** It is useful for infants to have experience playing with and exploring the properties of cups and spoons before they use them to eat and drink.

**Social Awareness: Small Group, 16 to 36 months**

## 6-5 Dolls

**Goals:** To increase social awareness; to increase language and communication skills; to increase sensory motor skills

**Materials:** Multiethnic dolls

**Procedure:** Encourage exploration of the dolls. Help toddlers gently feel the dolls' hair, eyes, and clothing, and to move body parts. Name body parts and clothing for toddlers. Encourage them to play with dolls in different ways. Toddlers may want to carry, cuddle, bottle-feed, sing to, or rock the doll baby. When they are ready, introduce new ways of playing with the doll. Encourage two children to play together and talk about what each is doing and why. Encourage them to think about what the doll baby might want or need. See if toddlers can imitate skills that are more difficult: pretending to feed with a spoon, sprinkling powder or rubbing lotion on body parts, and combing the doll's hair. Help toddlers use their imagination with the doll. Take the doll for a walk in a wagon or stroller. Wash the baby in a small tub, using soap and a washcloth, and then dry the doll with a towel. Help children develop adaptive skills by practicing undressing and dressing, not only themselves, but also a doll.

**Assessment:** The toddler will demonstrate at least three different types of caregiving activities using the doll.

**Integration:** Teach children caregiving skills. They are often more willing to practice adaptive skills in play.

**Social Awareness: Small Group, 16 to 36 months**

## 6-6 Washing Dishes

**Goals:** To increase social awareness; to increase sensory motor skills

**Materials:** Plastic dishes, basin, water (lukewarm)

**Procedure:** Put the dishes in the basin and have toddlers explore the dishes. Encourage them to put the dishes in the basin, swish the water, and take them out. Talk about their actions. Ask them questions. Have at least two basins so that children can interact. Say "out" as you take a dish out and "in" as you put the dishes in. Physically guide the child's hand, if needed. Say, "Good, you took it out!" Fill the basin with a small amount of water and add a small amount of soap. Let children "wash" dishes. Add a sponge or handled scrubber for them to wash dishes. Have several towels available to dry dishes. Encourage appropriate actions; that is, placing cups on saucers, pouring, and stirring the cup with a spoon. Have children sort utensils in a storage unit. Encourage them to match items by color. Have children set the table and use dishes to serve snack.

**Assessment:** The toddler will parallel play with others while washing and drying dishes.

**Integration:** Toddlers enjoy pretending with familiar objects. The lukewarm water is soothing.

#### Language Development: Individual, birth to 9 months

## 6-7 Talking Walk

**Goals:** To increase language and communication skills; to increase cognitive development

**Materials:** None

**Procedure:** Pick the infant up and hold him so he can see over your shoulder. Walk around the room and point out objects and events that are taking place and what other infants and toddlers are doing. “That’s the telephone. Sometimes it rings and I talk to people on it. There is Roxanna, she is playing with Dot. This is one of my favorite pictures. Aura painted it. See the beautiful red she used.” For younger infants make the walk shorter and talk less. Use items that the infant is familiar with and start out with what she knows, like her own coat, then let her touch it. Use disparate items to continue such as a book; allow her to touch this also. Only label one or two items and then stop. With older infants label more items and talk about their function. Encourage the infant to touch the items and try to imitate what you say. Vary what you say to include a “What is that?” Wait a few seconds and then say something like “Those are Nathan’s boots!” Use similar items such as sneakers, boots, slippers, and shoes to make it even more difficult and talk about the properties of footgear and why they are different.

**Assessment:** The infant will participate in the walk and focus on the identified items.

**Integration:** Infants need to learn about and feel comfortable in their environment. The view from your shoulder is very different from their view from the floor, so it is important they see this too. Although infants will not understand all the words you use, they will hear the different tones of your voice and begin to make associations, especially if you demonstrate what the objects do.



Carrying infants in different ways, showing them different objects in their environment, and talking to them about what they see supports learning in young infants.

#### Language Development: Individual, birth to 9 months

## 6-8 Signs

**Goals:** To increase language and communication skills; to increase cognitive development

**Materials:** None

**Procedure:** Look at the sign for “more.” Learn how to do the sign so you feel comfortable teaching infants the sign. Show the infant the sign for “more” during an activity or feeding when you want to know whether or not the infant wants more. Use the sign for more before or during feeding and show the infant the sign every time you feed her. Consistency is key. Use the sign for more until the infant begins to sign back to you. Once infants know the sign “more” begin to add additional signs.

**Assessment:** The infant will use the sign for “more” when she wants more.

**Integration:** Infants can control their hands before they can talk. Being able to give adults feedback about their needs helps everyone. Having all children learn useful signs is particularly helpful for infants with developmental delays, hearing

impairments, and English language learners. The more signs they learn the earlier they can communicate. This can also be helpful in toilet training if children know the signs for wet and dry.

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**Language Development: Individual, 8 to 18 months**

## 6-9 My Active Activity Book

**Goals:** To increase language and communication skills; to increase sensory motor skills

**Materials:** Three-hole plastic sleeves, markers, a digital camera or camera with film, photographs of mobile infants' being active, construction paper or poster board, paste, three-hole binders (optional)

**To Make:** *Take photographs of mobile infants engaged in active activities throughout several days. Some examples are crawling, rolling, walking, dancing, clapping and so on. Print the photographs or have them developed. Cut construction paper or poster board into 8 1/2" × 11" pieces so each fits inside the plastic sleeve. Paste the photographs of the mobile infants on both side of the construction paper (one or two per side) and put each page into a separate sleeve. Make a name page to identify the mobile infant and fasten them together with yarn or place them in a three-hole binder. Add photographs as mobile infants learn new skills.*

**Procedure:** Place the mobile infant on your lap or sit beside him. Look through the book with him and talk about each photograph and what he is doing, how important physical activity is in making him strong and healthy and how wonderful he is. After reading the book encourage him to move like some of the photographs. If time has passed point out how much farther or faster he can move now. Encourage him to see how far he can walk or run and for how long.

**Assessment:** The mobile infant will look at the book and perform the requested activities.

**Integration:** "Book babble" is an important preliteracy skill. Mobile infants jabber in a tone and pattern that sounds like reading if they have been read to. They are practicing language in a new and different way. In addition to literacy this encourages mobile infants to practice emerging skills. Practice helps the mobile infants' efficiency and coordination. Although you do not need to teach mobile infants to move, movement opportunities enhance the ongoing maturation of motor pathways in the infant's brain and spinal cord.

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**Language Development: Individual, 8 to 18 months**

## 6-10 Nursery Rhymes and Chants

**Goals:** To increase language and communication skills; to increase sensory motor skills; to increase creative development

**Materials:** Books with simple nursery rhymes such as I'm a little teapot; This little piggy; Baa, baa, black sheep; Hickory dickory dock; and so on

**Procedure:** Read, chant, or sing nursery rhymes as you turn the pages of the books with a mobile infant. Use the books frequently so infants continue to hear the rhymes and chants. Add silly rhymes and ones that you play the leader and the children follow your actions such as

- Up to the ceiling (raise hands up)
- Down to the floor (put hands down)
- Left to the window (point left with left hand)
- Right to the door (point right with right hand)
- This is my right hand – (wave it vigorously)
- Raise it up high (raise right hand and stretch)
- This is my left hand – (wave it vigorously)
- Reach for the sky (raise left hand up, keep right up and stretch)
- Right hand, left hand (wave both hands)
- Twirl them around (twirl hands over one another)
- Left hand, right hand (keep twirling)
- Pound, pound, pound (reach down and pound the ground)

Do not expect mobile infants to know their right hand from their left, it is the motion and rhyme that is important. Make up motions to songs, and continue to pair language and movement.

**Assessment:** The mobile infant will listen to the book and participate in acting out the rhyme or chant.

**Integration:** Do not expect mobile infants to follow the directions as they are said. Mobile infants can increase their physical activity by acting out imaginative nursery rhymes and chants. They can develop creativity and language while increasing their activity level. When songs or rhymes with actions are done in a series they help build endurance and increase brain activity.

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**Language Development: Individual, 16 to 36 months**

## 6-11 Puppets

**Goals:** To increase language and communication skills; to increase creative development

**Materials:** Duck or bunny puppets (or other animal puppets)

**Procedure:** With the puppet on your hand, talk to the toddler and encourage the toddler to talk with the duck or bunny: "I'm a duck. I say 'quack, quack.'" Encourage the toddler to imitate sounds, words, or actions. Then let the toddler experiment with putting the puppet on his hand. Use the puppet to have a "conversation" with the toddler. Give the toddler time to respond.

**Assessment:** The toddler will respond to overtures by the puppet and will socially interact with the puppet.

**Integration:** Talking with puppets encourages peer interaction as well as fostering language development. Simple puppets that use whole-hand movements are best at this age.

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**Language Development: Individual, 16 to 36 months**

## 6-12 Dressing Book

**Goals:** To increase language and communications skills; to increase sensory motor skills

**Materials:** A book about dressing

**Procedure:** Begin by using children's clothing and ask toddlers to point to the part of themselves that the clothing would cover. If necessary, give them a choice. Then point to the picture and back to the clothing as you name each. Name and point to the articles of clothing. Ask the toddler to point to the correct picture as you name each article. Then ask him to name the article of clothing shown in the picture and find the piece of clothing if he is wearing that article. Encourage toddlers to "read" the book to you. Then ask them to show you where each article goes, for instance: "Where do the shoes go? Yes, that's right! Shoes go on your feet!"

**Assessment:** The toddler will point to the articles of clothing named and show where they go on his body.

**Integration:** This activity fosters adaptive behavior as well as language development. There is no expectation that toddlers will dress themselves, rather, that their awareness is increased and that they frame these experiences as positive.

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**Cognitive Development: Individual, birth to 9 months**

## 6-13 Scrunches

**Goals:** To increase cognitive development; to increase sensory motor skills

**Materials:** Brightly colored scrunches (what women use to hold ponytails) or commercially available baby wrist and ankle elastics

**Procedure:** Put scrunches around the infant's wrists or ankles. Point these out to the infant by holding the infant's hand and saying, "Look at you, this hand looks great!" Check to see if the infant's eyes focus on the hand (or on the scrunches). For young infants use scrunches made out of black-and-white striped or highly contrasting, patterned materials. Securely attach a large bell to a scrunchie or circle of elastic that can go over the baby's feet. Encourage the infant to bring his hands or feet to his mouth. Help him focus on the scrunches for longer periods of time.

**Assessment:** The infant will attend to the ankles or wrists with the scrunches for increasing periods.

**Integration:** Infants need to become aware of and explore their own bodies before they can reach and grasp objects. Brightly colored or striped socks also call infants' attention to their feet. *Note:* Adding a bell for sound provides an additional stimulus. It is a safety hazard if it is small enough to be swallowed. Use a large bell, attach it securely, check it regularly and use it only under adult supervision.

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#### Cognitive Development: Individual, birth to 9 months

## 6-14 Infant Massage

**Goals:** To increase cognitive development; to increase sensory motor skills

**Materials:** Lotion, changing table, floor, couch, or bed

**Procedure:** Place the infant on a changing table or other surface. Undress the infant (be sure it is warm enough). Place some lotion in one hand to warm it, and then put the lotion on the infant's body. As you massage the infant's body with the lotion, talk to the infant about his body. "Adolfo, now I'm going up and down your arm. Let's check out that hand. You've got five fingers. I'm going to count them. One, two, three, four, oh, actually this one is a thumb." Continue to talk to the infant as you massage his body. Just do one area of the infant's body such as the arms or legs. As children respond, talk in more detail about what you are doing.

**Assessment:** The infant attends to and responds to the massage by increased body awareness.



Infant massage increases body awareness, helps the infant relax, and establishes a close trusting relationships between the infant and her caregiver.

**Integration:** Massaging the infant's body increases body awareness. It is also good for relaxation and for establishing closeness between infants and their caregivers. Occupational therapists often use massage with children to increase awareness before performing skills (a hand massage before doing fine motor skills). It can also be used to decrease tension in muscles for children with high muscle tone. Talk to occupational therapists about how to use this to benefit the children you are working with. *Note:* Talk with parents about infant massage. Some parents are very comfortable with your massaging their infants while others may not be as comfortable. Support parents in learning about infant massage and encourage them to do it at home if they do not wish to have it done in the classroom. Some parents find massage to be a very personal thing so check with parents first.

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#### Cognitive Development: Individual, 8 to 18 months

## 6-15 Hidden Toys

**Goals:** To increase cognitive development; to increase social awareness

**Materials:** A small toy, several cloths

**Procedure:** Get the infant intrigued with a toy. Then cover the toy completely with cloth and say, "Oh, where did it go?" Encourage the infant to find it. Start by partly covering the toy with cloth. If the infant does not attempt to get it, point to the toy and again encourage her. If she still does not find it, take the cloth off dramatically and say, "Here it is!" If the infant

is willing, play the game again. If the infant easily finds the toy, hide it first under one cloth, and then move it to the other, covering the toy completely. Initially, expect that the infant will hunt under the first cloth and then go to the second.

**Assessment:** The infant will successfully find the hidden toy.

**Integration:** Activities such as these help infants develop the concept of object permanence. Play peek-a-boo and other games that focus on hiding and finding as well.

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**Cognitive Development: Individual, 8 to 18 months**

## 6-16 Mimic

**Goals:** To increase cognitive development; to increase language and communication skills

**Materials:** Three vegetables of different colors (e.g., broccoli, carrots, and mushrooms) steamed for about 10 minutes and cut into very small pieces, plates

**Procedure:** A serving size for a mobile infant is approximately 2 tablespoons. Put each color of vegetable on a small plate and encourage mobile infants to pass the plate (with your help) and choose a piece(s) of vegetable to put on their plate (or make individual plates but mobile infants are more likely to try things if they can choose). Eat with the mobile infants and talk about the vegetables and how you enjoy them. Help them learn the names of the foods they are eating.

**Assessment:** The mobile infant will try at least one of the vegetables or fruits.

**Integration:** Provide a similar snack with fruit. Mobile infants are just learning healthy eating habits. Nutrient-dense age appropriate foods for snack include fruit, vegetables, cheese, yogurt and water. Juice has too much sugar. Making eating a social experience helps all mobile infants to see others eating and choosing.

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**Cognitive Development: Individual, 16 to 36 months**

## 6-17 Shape Sorter

**Goals:** To increase cognitive development; to increase sensory motor skills

**Materials:** Shape sorter

**Procedure:** Present the toy to the child and encourage the toddler to lift the top off, remove the shapes, and then replace the top. Encourage them to place the shapes in appropriate holes. If needed, demonstrate how the shapes fit into the holes. If this is difficult, have toddlers put in and take out the shapes without the lid. Then cover one or two spaces with your hand or a piece of cardboard or tape so children have fewer choices. As toddlers become more skillful, use a shape sorter with more shapes, name the shapes, and ask toddlers to put in the shapes you name.

**Assessment:** The toddler will put the shapes in the correct holes.

**Integration:** Help toddlers learn about the shapes in their environment. Play games looking for round, square, or triangular shapes in the room. Use form boards.

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**Cognitive Development: Individual, 16 to 36 months**

## 6-18 Take-Apart Toys

**Goals:** To increase cognitive development; to increase language and communication skills; to increase sensory motor skills

**Materials:** Toys (animals) that come apart

**Procedure:** Present the toy to the toddler to explore. If she doesn't take it apart on her own, show her how. Talk about the toy's body parts. Ask, "Where's his head?" and so on. Use the toy to stimulate language development while you

do the more difficult taking apart and putting together. Ask, "Is this where the head goes?" Or ask the child to show you where the head goes and then you put it on. Take off one part at a time, such as the head or tail. Encourage the toddler to replace that piece. Gradually remove more and more pieces for the toddler to replace or encourage the toddler to pull the toy apart. Help put the toy back together as needed.

**Assessment:** The toddler will take the toy apart, identify the body parts, and put it back together.

**Integration:** This activity helps toddlers think about body parts as well as part-whole relationships.

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**Sensory Motor Development: Individual, birth to 9 months**

## 6-19 Keys

**Goals:** To increase sensory motor skills; to increase cognitive development

**Materials:** Plastic keys

**Procedure:** Call the infant's name and shake keys. Gently place the keys in her hand. Help her mouth, look at, or shake the keys, if necessary. Keep the keys close to the midline. Then offer keys for her to reach and grasp from different angles (up, down, right, left). Have her reach across her midline to get the keys. (This can be encouraged by having the child hold a toy in one hand while you offer the keys.) Increase the distance the keys are from the infant so that it is a long reach. Put the keys out of the infant's field of vision and call, "Get the keys," so she has to turn and reach.

**Assessment:** The infant will reach for and grasp the keys, crossing her midline.

**Integration:** Any small toy that intrigues the infant can be used. Reaching across her midline helps the sides of an infant's brain communicate with each other.

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**Sensory Motor Development: Individual, birth to 9 months**

## 6-20 Yoga for Infants

**Goals:** To increase sensory motor skills; to increase cognitive development

**Materials:** None

**Procedure:** Lie down on the floor (or a bed or couch) with your legs bent. Place the infant on your bent legs facing you. Smile and talk to him and tell him what you will be doing. Gently take his right arm and move it across his body to his left waist. Hold it for about five seconds and then return it to his side. Do the same thing with the left arm and then the legs. As you are doing this activity, keep saying things like "I'm moving your arm." "I'll take it across your body and touch your waist." "Doesn't that stretch feel good?"

For variation place the infant supine on a mat or blanket. Place one hand on each of the infant's legs and gently lift the legs up and bring them toward the infant's chest. Hold this pose for 5 seconds, then slowly put the infant's legs back down to the floor. Repeat this several times. And, keep talking.

**Assessment:** The infant will participate in yoga and hold the poses with adult help.

**Integration:** Cross-lateral movements require the two hemispheres of the brain to work together. When infants do movements that cross the midline of the body such as reaching the right arm to the left leg these communications increase. Yoga can help infants sleep, improve digestion, ease gas pains and colic, stimulate neuromuscular development, and boost the immune system. It is a great way to teach body awareness.



The cross-lateral movements in yoga help the sides of the brain to communicate with each other. In some cultures yoga-type movements are an expected part of child rearing.

**Sensory Motor Development: Individual, 8 to 18 months**

## 6-21 Grab It

**Goals:** To increase sensory motor skills; to increase cognitive development

**Materials:** A variety of small blocks of different sizes

**Procedure:** With the child in a sitting position, hold a small block just outside of the infant's reach and see if he will reach for it. If not, place the block closer to the infant's midline or preferred hand, if established. If the infant takes the block, offer a second and then a third to see what he does. Vary where you place the block for reaching. Sometimes place it close to the center of the infant's body, sometimes more to the right or left so he has to maintain balance while reaching. Give the infant two blocks and keep two matching blocks. Clap them together or bang them and see if the infant will imitate you.

**Assessment:** The infant will grasp the blocks, explore them, and use two blocks together in some way.

**Integration:** Some children need to be encouraged to reach, grasp, and imitate.

**Sensory Motor Skills: Individual, 8 to 18 months**

## 6-22 Variations on Push and Pull

**Goals:** To increase sensory motor skills; to increase cognitive development

**Materials:** A variety of push and pull toys

**Procedure:** First allow the infant to explore the toy and then roll the toy slightly out of his reach. Encourage him to crawl after the toy. As he reaches it push it a little farther, then encourage him to push it rather than retrieve it. (Don't do this to the point where he is frustrated.) Help push the toy in front of the infant. Move it slowly so he can crawl after it. Choose toys that move slowly with a small push, and encourage the infant to follow it as quickly as he can. When the child understands about pushing toys, introduce toys that can be pulled as well. When the child is comfortable using push and pull toys, encourage him to push or pull them to a specific location.

**Assessment:** The child will push or pull a toy to a designated location.

**Integration:** Use push toys before pull toys. Some pull toys are a challenge to beginning walkers, as the child must concentrate on holding onto the toy, know where the toy is relative to where he is, and walk at the same time.

**Sensory Motor Development: Small Group, 16 to 36 months**

## 6-23 Moving Like the Animals

**Goals:** To increase sensory motor skills; to increase language and communication skills

**Materials:** Pictures of familiar animals

**Procedure:** See if toddlers can identify the animals in the picture. Help them decide if the animals are large or small and how they move. Have the children move as they think the animal would move. As toddlers become more proficient, choose less familiar animals with obvious movement patterns. Talk about animals and where they live.

**Assessment:** The child will move like the designated animal.

**Integration:** This activity helps children learn more about the world in which they live and even think about it differently.

**Sensory Motor Development: Individual or Small Group, 16 to 36 months**

## 6-24 Dump and Fill

**Goals:** To increase sensory motor skills; to increase cognitive development

**Materials:** Dishpans, rice, oatmeal, beans, plastic measuring cups, measuring spoons

**Procedure:** Put about 2 inches of rice, oatmeal, or beans in a dishpan. Add a variety of cups and spoons. If necessary, place children's hands in the container and help them explore the medium. Encourage them to fill the container with their hands and dump them. Have toddlers dump the contents from one container into another.

**Integration:** This activity is a precursor to pouring liquids, but far less messy. It has the potential for simple exploration as well as for building concepts about measurement and size. With older children, I would not use edible products but with infants and toddlers, they are likely to eat whatever they use.

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**Creative Arts: Individual, birth to 8 months**

## 6-25 Touching Songs

**Goals:** To increase creative development; to increase social awareness; to increase sensory motor skills

**Materials:** None

**Procedure:** Sing or chant songs or rhymes where you touch the infant such as "This little piggy went to market," "I'm going to get your nose," and "Hickory Dickory Dock." Sing or hum a song while you hold the infant and move him to the rhythm of the song such as "Rock-A-Bye Baby." Help him do the motions to songs or rhymes like "Pat-A-Cake" or "Johnny Hammers with One Hammer" by holding him on your lap and gently moving his body.

**Assessment:** The infant enjoys the song and anticipates what is going to happen next.

**Integration:** Infants learn to feel secure through close sensitive contact.

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**Creative Arts: Individual, birth to 9 months**

## 6-26 Textured Mat

**Goals:** To increase creative development; to increase sensory motor skills

**Materials:** Mat made of various materials (satin, cotton, fake fur, velvet, terry cloth, Lycra, knit fabric, suede, leather-like, and so on) (commercially available)

**To Make:** *Sew together squares of various materials. Nine squares of 12 inches each makes a good size mat (36" × 36").*

**Procedure:** Place the infant prone on mat. If it is warm enough, have her in diapers. Take a corner of the mat and stroke her hand with it and talk with her about the texture of the material and how it feels. Talk about how the squares are different in color, pattern, and texture. Discuss how they look and feel. Place her in different positions on the mat so it is easier to reach other textures. As infants become older, they can use 6-inch fabric squares to explore by themselves.

**Assessment:** The infant will explore the mat and respond to the different textures.

**Integration:** Some infants might not like some of the textures, so go gently, using smooth, soft textures first. Help the infant explore the fabrics and gently rub one piece of fabric on her arm and talk about how it looks and feels.

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**Creative Arts: Individual, 8-18 months**

## 6-27 Row, Row, Row Your Boat

**Goals:** To increase creative development; to increase sensory motor skills

**Materials:** None

**Procedure:** Place the mobile infant in an upright sitting position facing you. Place her so she is sitting between your outstretched legs so you can provide her with support for sitting if needed. Take her hands in yours and begin singing "Row, row, row your boat." As you sing, rock back and forth with the infant—this will feel like you are actually rowing a boat together.

**Assessment:** The mobile infant will rock back and forth in tune to the music with adult support.

**Integration:** Infants with low muscle tone may need additional support. Place them on your lap with their back toward your front. Extend your hands and theirs and gently rock back and forth. For infants who want more activity row more vigorously and make some variations such “Row, row, row your boat quickly down the stream, faster, faster, faster now until we catch your dream.”

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Creative Arts: Individual, 8 to 18 months

## 6-28 Doing it Songs

**Goals:** To increase creative development; to increase language and communication skills

**Materials:** None

**Procedure:** Talk to mobile infants about what they do during the day. Tell them that you are going to make up a song about what they do. Encourage them to decide on motions to go with the words. If this is taking a long time, suggest appropriate movements to go with the verse. Try to get several related concepts. Ask them what they do in the morning or what they do when they get up. (Have a sequence that will work in your mind before you start and only do as many verses as there is interest.) Sing to the tune of “Here we go round the mulberry bush.”

This is the way we wash our hands, wash our hands, wash our hands.

This is the way we wash our hand so early in the morning.

Morning

Get out of bed	Wash our hands
Brush our teeth	Comb our hair
Put on our clothes	Eat our breakfast
Come to school	

Substitute an activity theme such as cleaning house

Sweep the floors	Vacuum the rugs
Make our beds	Wipe the table

Another variation is to ask mobile infants what they like to do and incorporate their name into the song.

This is the way Claudia plays with the ball, plays with the ball, plays with the ball.

This is the way Claudia plays with the ball, and plays with all her friends.

To promote healthy eating you can peel bananas, eat peas, and any other healthy foods.

**Assessment:** The mobile infant will participate in some of the motions with adult support.

**Integration:** Mobile infants begin to sing by “tagging on” that is, at the end of the songs they copy what they hear sung. They just lag a bit. Hearing more complex language and music develops more sophisticated language skills. Music uses many senses simultaneously, it makes mobile infants brains “light up” in many different areas. These growing neural networks become the foundation of learning in many areas such as math and language. Whether or not children participate accurately is not as relevant as if they participate actively and with purpose. Ensure that you include the music and words that reflect the culture of the children in the class.

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Creative Arts: Individual or Small Group, 16 to 36 months

## 6-29 Painting with Water

**Goals:** To increase creative development; to increase sensory motor skills

**Materials:** 1-inch and 2-inch paintbrushes, buckets, water

**Procedure:** On a warm day, fill buckets with water and encourage toddlers to paint the sidewalk or building. Encourage them to draw faces or pictures and then watch as the sun makes them disappear.

**Assessment:** The toddler will paint with the water and brushes.

**Integration:** This is a clean painting activity. Toddlers are free to experiment with the water and brush.

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**Creative Arts: Small Group, 16 to 36 months**

## 6-30 Big Pictures

**Goals:** To increase creative development; to increase social awareness

**Materials:** Large sheet of newsprint, water-based markers, large crayons, large chalk

**Procedure:** Cover a table with paper; tape it down. Be sure each toddler has space to draw with markers, crayons, and chalk while encouraging him to be part of a group. Make the picture have a theme and have the toddlers' scribble something related to that theme. If toddlers desire, label the scribble and write what they say about it.

**Assessment:** The toddler will place a mark on the group paper.

**Integration:** Leave the paper out long enough so toddlers can leave and come back. Young toddlers often leave an activity and return to it later.

## Summary

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Infants change and grow rapidly and educators adapt the curriculum and activities to their needs. Their repertoire is small so variations on experiences predominate for young infants (birth to 9 months). Mobile infants (8 to 18 months) reach major developmental milestones. Their curriculum is driven by their interest in moving and the development of language. Toddlers (16 to 36 months) are predictably mobile and are experiencing bursts of cognitive and language growth. They are curious and want to learn about themselves and their world. Experiences and activities are designed to meet these needs.

## Educational Resources

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**Better Baby Care Campaign**, a nationwide effort to improve the quality of infant and toddler child care, provides up-to-date information on research and resources about infant and toddler care. The website also provides information on federal, state, and local policy initiatives. <http://www.betterbabycare.org>

**Clearinghouse on Early Education and Parenting (CEEP)** is part of the Early Childhood and Parenting (ECAP) Collaborative at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. CEEP provides publications and informa-

tion to the worldwide early childhood and parenting communities. <http://ceep.crc.uiuc.edu/index.html>

**Early Head Start Nation Resource Center** at Zero to Three has information about Early Head Start as well as ideas for teaching young infants, mobile infants, and toddlers. Their goal is to share knowledge with infant-toddler teachers and home visitors. <http://www.ehsnrc.org>

**Healthy Child Care America (HCCA)** supported by the American Academy of Pediatrics, with the Department of Health and Human Services, the Child Care Bureau, and the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, sponsors the Healthy Child Care America Campaign that has resources for parents and early childhood educators. Launched in 1995, HCCA seeks to maximize the health, safety, well-being, and developmental potential of all children so that each child experiences quality child care within a nurturing environment and has a medical home. <http://www.healthychildcare.org>

**ZERO TO THREE** provides information on brain development, learning during everyday routines, the developmental assessment process, parenting tips, professional journal articles, policy briefs, A-Z topic listings, a search engine, and a list of Spanish materials. <http://www.zerotothree.org>

**For additional resources, visit the book companion website for this text at [www.cengage.com/education/deiner](http://www.cengage.com/education/deiner).**

